

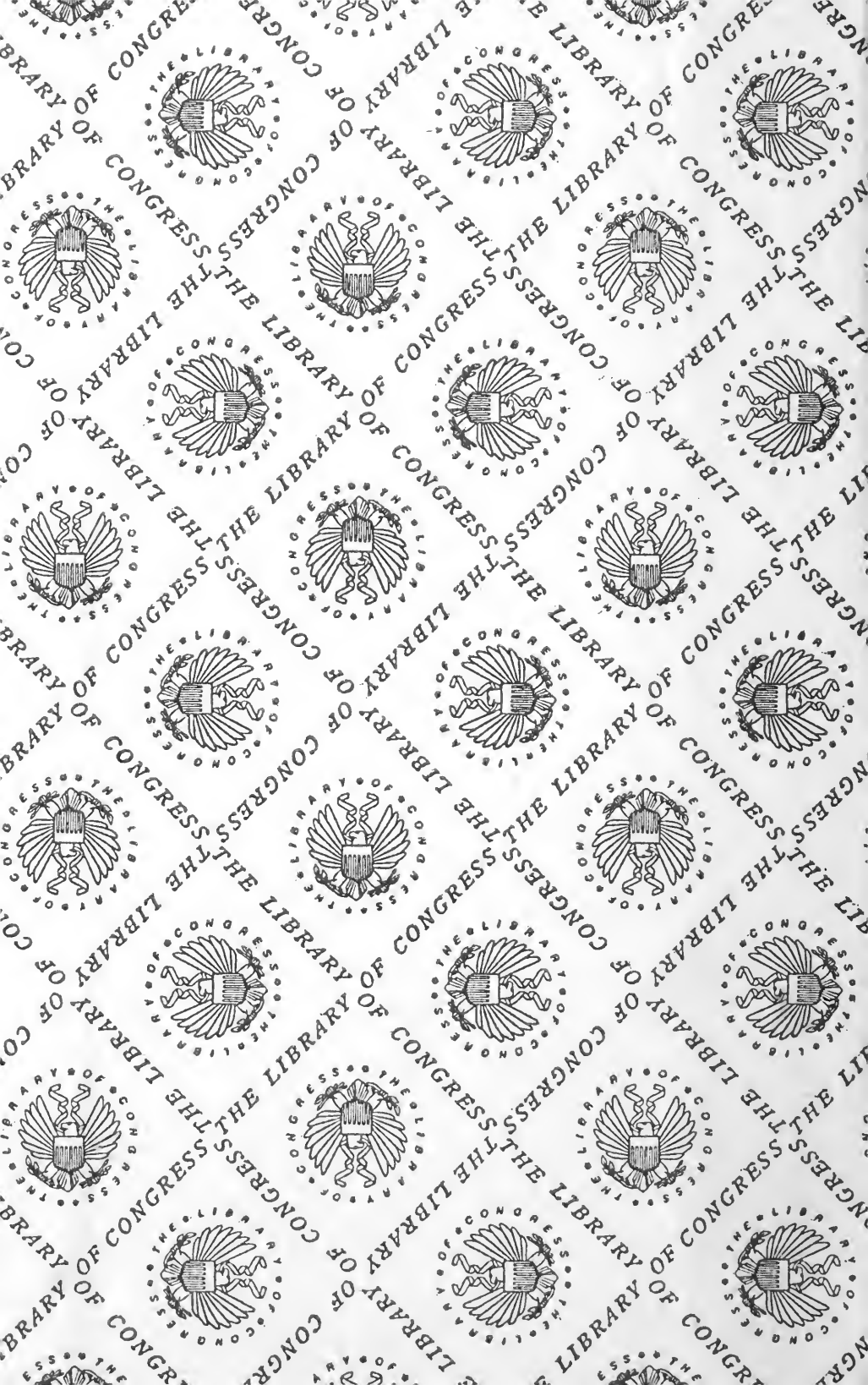
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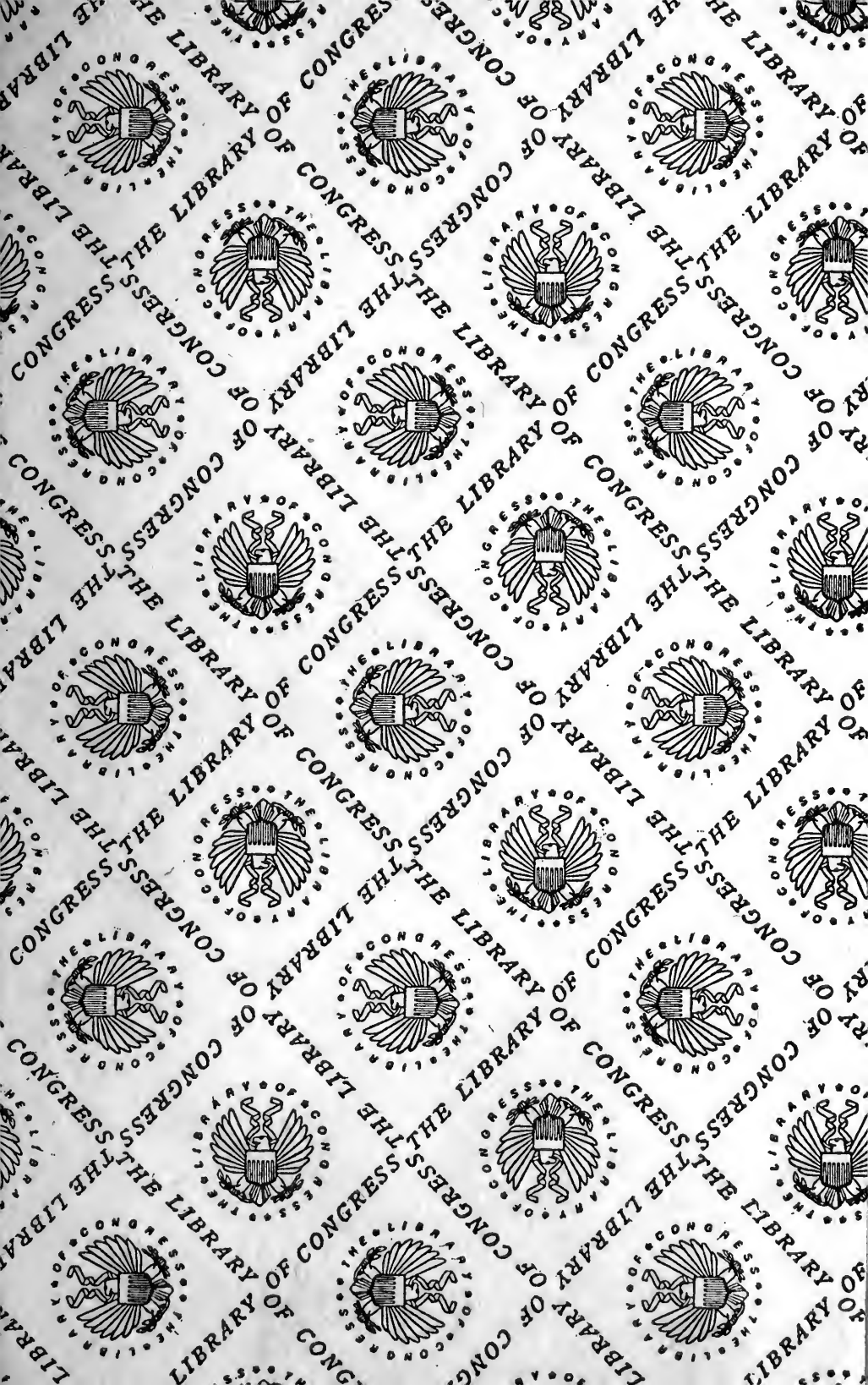
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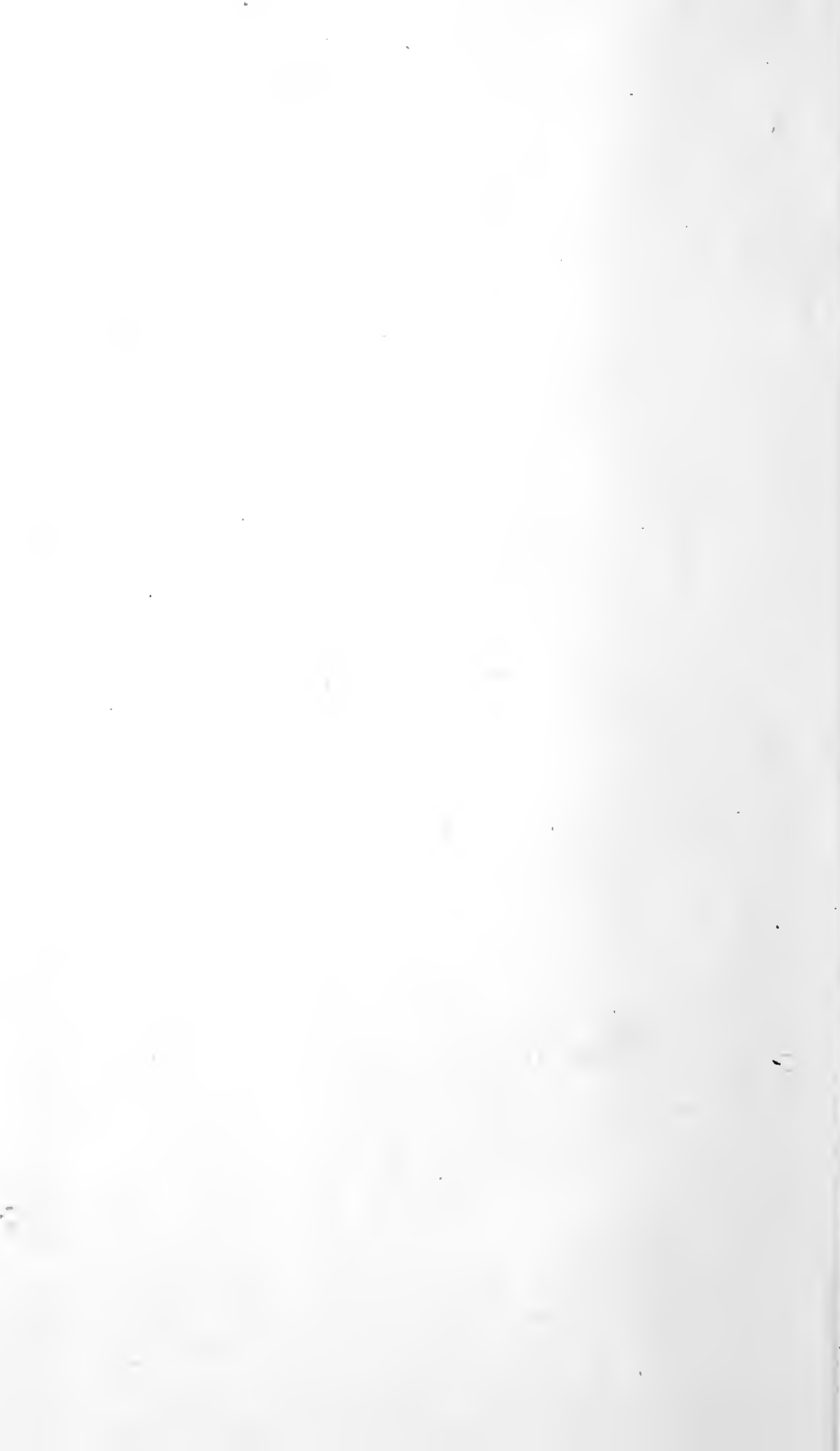
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THE

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AGE OF SIN,

OR

HINTS FOR CRITICS.

A SATIRE.

33



PHILADELPHIA:
LINDSAY & BLAKISTON.

PR

1851.

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The Age of Sin.

A SATIRE.

“Who shall dispute what the Reviewers say!
Their word’s sufficient; and to ask a reason,
For such a state as theirs, is downright treason.”

CHURCHILL.

“Vice is my theme, let sermon be my song—
Be that my motto and my fate.”

DEAN SWIFT.

To serve, to be subservient to strife—
To factious party, let its emprise be
Or good or evil, and the means be right
Or wrong so the desired end is gained—
To hot-mouthed Faction be servility,

A baser reptile 'midst the grovelling worms—
To cull so much from Wisdom's mystic book
As dulls Imagination's fancy flights,
Drowns common sense (a cloud midway 'twixt
Earth

And Heaven, pendant there and station-fixed;
A dull, dark cloud, immovable to soar
Aloft to grander realms of lofty Thought—
To mix with worlds immortal, or to bend
Low down to sweet, domesticated Earth—
And unapproachable, where dire disease,
Contagion-winged, burst vital poison from
Its caverns darkly deep--bars near approach
To worthier planets of the spacious realm)
To live—to die, unknowing and unknown,
Shut out from calm enjoyment, sweet, is made
The abject lot of meaner men on Earth,
The host of blustering pedagogues who sway
The mighty multitude with lying puffs,
And praise and fat the prey they plan to pluck.

Grant me, O Muse, propitious ! must I mix
My tender nature, formed for feeling, and
The inner spirit of my salient soul—
Contaminate my being, pure as yet,
And render in exchange my truthful strains
For earth-born streams from unimmortal minds—
Gird closer to my breast thy sin-proof shield—
Fit on thy gauntlet to my wrist, and 'gage
In strife with such small, pigmy foes as these ?

Howe'er these things may be, I am attacked,
And all the freeborn nature of my soul,
Unto the inmost recess of my heart,
Encompassed with a robe of Justice—Truth—
Ferments with boiling wrath to seize the spear,
And hurl it headlong 'gainst the hostile foe.
High game my spear would wish to battle with,
That Earth might list in wonder when we meet,
And if I'm struck, unhorsed, unhelmeted,
The winds might laugh at my discomfiture :

Alas, no noble game the field unfolds ;
And I must seek the greatest of these small,
Pursue him on unceasingly till caught,
Then leave him writhing on the ground with fright,
Disdain to strike a fallen enemy,
The meanest of the mean, crouching in fear,
His conscience sore, will be sufficient vengeance ;
Yet I will watch him, lest he turn again
With subtle arts and ravish Beauty's self,
Then mercy will I none, but surely strike.

There be occasions oft that Fate provides
From out her many leaves of foregone deeds,
When Man must act defensive e'en 'gainst dogs :
Sometimes with rancour gnawing at their roots,
Maddened with pain, by Jealousy set on,
They gnash their horrid fangs in envious spite—
Mad Frenzy making green their eyes, they 'tack
The one who fain would bear them better fate :
Sad dogs ! to spurn the hand they once had licked,

And turn against the foot where once they
crouched ;

But now 'twill crush them with an iron heel.

False friends, base enemies, are but the same,

Through life hypocrisy—to death deceit !

War with them all ! 'tis outraged Justice calls—

Calls for her own, not suppliant, but demands

From base Scurrility to rescue Truth ;

And, doomed to black Perdition's chained abode,

To banish Falsehood to its nether world

Of ever darkness, with its pond'rous gates,

Close-barred with rivets forged of adamant,

Shut in and closed to all Eternity,

There seeking Life—there never finding Death.

Envy !—in Heaven by Jealousy first bred,

Conceiving Sin and giving birth to Death—

The shadow and eternal shade of Sin—

And luring to destruction—foul embrace—

Weak, earthly soul by vices with thee pregnant—

Thou art supreme in princely reign on Earth !
If angels, gods should hug thee to their breasts,
And doom themselves thereby to endless Hell—
With horrid oaths and groanings load down Night,
We may expect these frail, these earth-born souls
Will glue their lips to thine, and suck thy breath,
Each drop a poison leading to perdition,
And revel in a world of hellish deeds,
While Desolation whips them on to ruin.

Others I'll serve as only I've been served,
Not wrongfully, but just against unjust :
All knowledge is not pleasant in the world,
And I will draw a few unpleasant truths,
To some though they may be, from out the veil
Unmasked and now unhidden to my sight.
Praise—blame ; I nothing care : some words are
hard
When spiced and seasoned thick with vile intent,
And defamation makes them more impure.

Truth will be righted, backed by Justice armed,
And myriad legions burning for the fray :
What host can stand unmoved their warlike force !
I once did write ; but critics made pervert
Of things they understood not—factured faults
Where faults were none ; but now (forgive, my
Muse !)

I'll scribble, for it pleases best the age,
Years, ages passed and gone, perverted still—
When little men, who bluster big with rant
And canting phrases, got by rote and tuned—
Who, swaggering, stalk in puffed-up pride, find
praise

Over-consistent with their littleness ;
Their jests, low-bred, are gullested for wit,
So they perchance can spout a stolen pun :
Alas for freedom in Thought's lofty palace !
These paltry pedants, 'tis their nature, creed,
To feed the hungered with their poisonous weeds :
Their province, narrow and compact about,

Is vice, and their subjects, degradation :
If chance should throw into their evil sway
A modest youth, they cram his mouth with malice,
Outrage his virtue, and then cast him out,
Oppressed in heart, forlorn of hope, and naked.

The soaring fire of Genius never yet
Has blazoned forth before a raptured world—
In wonder and in mute astonishment
The critics view, till, Envy creeping in,
They flaw it piece by piece—without a stream
Of damp'ning irony—a flood of hate,
With malice fraught, against its struggling flame
In all its youthful ardour, being cast :
And, though the flame be quenched, the spark will
live ;

Years, ages, generations, all may pass
Unheeded, trampling on the slumbering flame ;
And other, weaker fires, may brightly beam
With soft refulgence for the hungered souls,

Yet still that spark will live, though silently,
In dark oblivion buried and forgot,
Adding fresh fuel and amassing strength,
Like to the lion foiled, couchant low down,
Gaining fresh vigour for a surer spring—
When least expected will its radiant light,
Thrusting aside oppression's weighty bars,
Burst forth upon the wonder-stricken world,
Illumining the heavens wide around ;
And men will gaze upon this cynosure
Enraptured, and find beauty in its rays
Where darkness and deformity had been ;
And still that flame will burn and burn for ever,
All humble fires eclipsed and dimmed by glory.

Deceit, Hypocrisy, the brothers twin,
Have many arts and guises various,
Roaming the wide world over, and, till felt,
Invisible, to crush their victim's peace—
Blast Innocence, their rightful enemy :

Truth has but one form in the path of Life ;
Deceit, Hypocrisy, have myriad shapes !
Their honeyed phrases, gliding glibly on,
And gilding Falsehood with their fulsome jests,
Make blinded men to think that right is wrong,
And Purity herself to be impure !
Yet when they chance in arrogance, where Truth
Keeps vigils slumberless o'er Innocence,
Guarding her sleep, by hallowed dreams made sweet,
From foul contamination's breath—their darts
Will harmless light upon her mailed breast—
Rebound back whence they were emitted forth,
By vengeance sped, hurled on with deadly force ;—
Well may they writhe beneath the torturing stroke,
And curse and groan in endless misery ;
And curse the shaft that quivers in their hearts—
The shaft they pruned, and winged swift on its
flight,
Its hardened head in Envy's poison steeped,
And hatred girded round its serpent form.

Some gentle bards, their natures all too much
Of Heaven to bear the scorn and taunting jests
That dropped like molten lead upon their breasts
Of yielding wax—too modest to return
A blow for blow, and by the gloomy prospect
Of future strife weighed down, and from revenge
Despairing turn—have languished, drooped, and
died,

(Though not unwept, forgot, nor unbeloved
By nobler, feeling souls, who knew their worth.)
Beneath the scathful influence of gibes
That flowed unceasingly, and cutting deep
From off the heartless critic's poisoned pen,
Sweeping lank desolation in its trail,
Distraction, broken hearts, and widowed beds ;
While others of more hardy temper—souls
Alive and bounding at the slightest touch
Of quick reproof or prejudiced review—
Their heaving bosoms swelling big with rage
Of unrequited merit, slighted worth,

And irritated by each stricture vile,
Have fired the burning shafts, and hurled aback,
With all the thunderbolts of Satire's force,
The overwhelming flow of irony
And criticism, and left it to stagnate
Within the bosom of the critic's breast ;—
Then all the torrent of his pasquinades,
His stinging, smarting gibes unsparingly,
In fortune change, come bounding on the tide,
Plunged through the current by the winds of truth,
Recoil with doubled force, redoubled strong,
Back whence to life they sprung, the parent fount,
And, overflowing thick with scurvy scum,
Breed lasting misery, with no revenge.

O'er this our native land, the poet's west,
In every shaded grove with fragrance filled,
O'er every court, and each light, rippling stream,
The great reviewers hold a sovereign sway ;
They bend the twig to suit them, crush the branch

That dare dispute their mighty majesty ;
And turn the crystal stream that dare to flow
Its limpid waters, though with murmurs soft,
Through fields of fancy, and forbidden meads,
Where flourish flowers, that to gaze upon
Their spirits are forbid and driven out,
Whose lustrous light would shrivel up their eyes
To sightless sockets—fire their tinder brain,
And send them howling to their native Hell :
Yet they encompass round these sacred fields
Their warlike force, and inch by inch they gain
The tempted frontiers to their tyrant sway ;
With treacherous tales the towers they besiege ;
They dam the founts of purity that flow
Into the plains, and bare their crystal beds.
And I have, single-handed, girded on
The sin-proof shield of Purity and Right,
And dare my soul their sovereign sway dispute :
I war with critics, and my arm shall wrest

Their conquered empire in the mind of man—
Restore to Truth her province and her realm.

Up, up the tree of knowledge, nobler souls,
Ye men of brain and wisdom lift aloft
Your broad, high foreheads, circling up
And sloping grandly o'er the mind's domain,
Drive back these narrow-minded, little-eyed,
And paltry pedants, who have here usurped
A forced dominion, and in secret clomb
Into the branches of the mighty tree,
Wide-spreading out their arms, all thickly clad
With venal poison—girded round about
With thongs of malice, and their noxious breath
Emitting forth a deadly demon mist,
That a great human host each hour inhale,
Breeding a sickly pallor in their souls,
Corroding, blighting all their peace of mind,
And, sinking sadly to their hearts, they look
On men as enemies, and hate mankind.

These are the fruits, the bourgeoned evil fruits,
Of mistaught morals judged by minds debased ;
Impurity is nurtured in the heart,
The seeds of Vice are planted in the soul,
And Falsehood springeth upward, and the fruit
Is misery, yea, wretchedness through life,
Foredoomed to sorrow by the baleful sway
Of doctrines taught by bad-intentioned men ;
Who serve their own ends, and the gilded gods
That lureth them with mammon, though the means
Be quenching every spark of virtuous life,
And trampling on the souls of myriad men ;
Panders to every vicious thought—scoffers
At all religion, while they tempt frail man
With maxims mortal to the living soul.

There lives a race of men, nor need we seek
Them far, who enter in the happy choir
Of tuneful birds with over-nice design ;
So merrily the little songsters chirp

Their lover lays of joy—unceasing strains
Of melody—entrancing all the soul,
Saddened with sorrow, and by care oppressed,
With gushing songs of everlasting praise ;
And lighting all the latent sparks, that lurk
In silence and forgotten in the heart,
Into a glowing flame, that thrills the breast
With joy, and pleasure, and sensations soft,
Long smothered and in dark oblivion hid ;
And stilling all wild passions into peace.
This race of men, reviewers vile at heart,
Are ever roaming through the chirping choir
With sad intent ; they find some noble bird,
Distinguished from the rest by grander strains
Of harmony, with wild magnificence ;
Its melody, all ringing clear and sweet,
Floats out, and rests upon the ambient air
That gently waves beneath the load of song—
It knows no care in singing, but must sing,
Must warble forth the overflowing stream.

Of joy, and must give utterance to the tide
That gushes fresh from melody's domain,
Must ever sing, though death be at the fount !
This noble, happy bird, alas ! is caught,
And, 'mid its joy, is banished from the choir,
And left to droop and die, starvation fed,
Because, perchance, a few dark feathers shade
The yellow, golden plumage of its breast.

This race of men—I hold it true as truth,
Are murderers ; it may not be of men,
But they destroy that which is greater far
Than life—all peace of mind, all hope through life !
They plant a rankling thorn within the breast,
Which works its way in torment to the heart,
And pricks its victim on to early death ;
They settle round the guiding star of Hope
An undissolving cloud, enshrouding close
In dank embrace, and warp around a veil
Of blight and desolation, till the star

That beamed so brightly, rots and fades away
Unto the region of despair ; they dash
Aside and trample on the cup of Fame,
When—sought by long devotion, and by oft
And painful struggles ; years of longing days
Exhausted in pursuit—its brim has reached
The touching of the dry and parched lips.
Thus desolation follows in their trail,
A wide-spread trail of blight, and gloom, and woe !

But, oh ! how sad, how sorrowful to see
The young, gay bird that soared unto the skies.
So grandly ; that so joyously did leap
Aloft into the ether space, and winged
Its happy flight away from worldly pain,
From woe, from care, and from restraint ; that
burst

The withes of bondage that encircled round
Its light and airy pinions—and that sprung
On high with limbs unfettered—muscles free,

That, motioning the clear and trackless sky,
Sought for a happy home in some bright star
From out the globes of glory swung on high;
Now lying lifeless on the humid ground,
Its airy pennons folded on its breast,
Its yellow, golden plumage ruffled up,
And motionless—Death's arrow in its heart!

When, in the silent solitude of death,
My form, enshrouded in a saintly dress,
And mouldering 'neath the cold, hard sod, shall be
Embraced by long-expectant mother earth,
Men will not love me then, nor heed if I
Be happy in an angel land, or be
Engulfed in torment in a demon world;
They reap the harvest, but bestow no thought
By whom the seeds were planted, where took root,
Nor who enrobed the glowing golden fields
That yield for them the nourishment of soul,
And fill the spacious garner of the mind

With drink to quench their burning hearts athirst;
Yet I should love my fellow-men, and do;
Their good is my good, and their living souls
Are sacred in my sight; I would unfold
My little store of knowledge to their gaze;
And teach them from experience all the good
And glowing things on this earth to enjoy,
And all the evil things that they should shun;
And, meditating thus within my soul,
I bid them of these pedagogues beware,
Lest they inculcate doctrines in their hearts,
And harbour serpents in their bosoms, that
Will turn and sting the breasts that nourished life.

Power is mighty, and by God is given
To temper Man and prove him worthy Heaven!
Ye, holding rental in its high estate,
Think not that oft commanding makes you great;
The frequent exercise—sometimes in vain—
Of might, its burnished dignity will stain,

And dim the brightness of the wielded chain ;
But use it justly, use it kind and fair ;
And, robed in mercy, let your hand forbear
From vain assumption of your proper right—
Abuse it not, tho' Reason prompts to smite ;
Let Nature take her true, her even course ;
Let Passion quickly spend its novel force ;
Let Justice calmly weigh each nicer deed ;
Then Power is sweet and dignity indeed !

But there are many, who, should chance present
A favoured time, will prostitute the pen
To party—cringe to faction, or will wield
The mighty engine of the mind so fierce
In praise of Vice and sinful acts, that men,
The mighty multitude, fearing to doubt,
Will drug their senses deep and hug belief.
These many men—these demons high in state—
Probation out their souls to Satan, or,
Which is the same, they slave for party cliques ;

And, 'with the house,' their burnished kettles cry,
And doom all other worthier metals base :
The simple belt of Mercy circles not
Their sin-stained bodies, nor the sceptered rod
Of Justice stand by them, upright and firm ;
The pure, unblemished conscience, that arrays
The blushing form of Virtue in a robe
Of splendour and magnificence—that dooms
The brazen brow of Guilt to lurk and hide
Its blackened face in shade of Man's disdain—
That shackles and condemns to bondage, Wrong—
That gives the palm, when due, to peaceful Right ;
That ever in the wavering, doubting heart
Instils the radiance of the beacon, Hope—
This noble feeling, this undying sense,
Holds not communion with their selfish hearts :
Earth-born and selfish is their every thought :
With them is found the friendship, windy-mouthed,
Smooth-tongued, that dupes believing, trusting man
Into a false reliance, then betrays

Its victim to the monster-ghoul, Despair :
They publish error such as they have learned
Through years of falsehood, and proclaim it right ;
Experienced adepts in all the arts
Of dissilation, as the fickle vane
That turns and veers with every changing wind ;
Their life is error ; and their meed is woe
Through countless ages in the gloomy grave,
Where evil spirits rend their tortured limbs—
And anguish in a demoniac world.

These men *may* understand the brother, Prose,
The working-man who hammers on the drum
Of worldly feelings ; and with leaden sense
They may digest the tones that echo forth
Their weighty notes upon the swollen tide,
And bound along the current loud and free.—
Their hearts are hollow, and are filled with air ;
Their souls are earthy, and they crave for earth !
And they will shape afresh their crooked quills,

Ho! for the conflict with a blacker nib!

But let them shun nor dare to desecrate
The garden of the sister, Poesy,
The bright, angelic being that belongs
Alone to mortals far removed from earth—
An angel seraph of another world—
The sweet recourse of sad mortality;
The soother and consoler of oppressed
And sunken spirits who may need the balm
Of consolation poured into their souls;
The door of whose retreat is ever open wide
Unto the heart forlorn and filled with woe,
Or brimmed with sorrow to the outer verge,
Where dark Despair may find a welcome home,
A hand to drag him from the yawning grave,
The guide of lisping childhood and of youth,
The mild instructress, teacher of Mankind!
These men of state will tramp the tender rose,
That sweetly blushes from its velvet nest,

That wafts its perfume out, and scents the air,
Borne down with load of mingled essences,
In mixed conformity of fragrant sweets,—
With rude, unwieldy feet; and at their touch,
Each blooming bud will droop its head, and sink
In maiden modesty unto the ground,
Frosted and blighted, withering unto death:
Some few, some lofty dahlias, stand alone,
In royal and sublime magnificence,
So proud in queen-like dignity arrayed,
And seem to dare the ruthless spoiler's touch,
Repelling them with Beauty's innate spell;
But they are robbed of foliage that bedecked
And beautified their structure—lone and bare!
Thus desolation follows in their trail.

Unmoved they hearken to her melody;
Sweet Poesy! sweet arbitress of fate!
Her fairy fingers touch the harp of Life
With swelling, lofty numbers, and a gush

Of finer feelings flowing from the soul,
A stream of dancing harmony, o'erfloods
The heaving bosom with a world of thoughts
And sweet emotions, passions newly-born,
That bid the happy heart rebound with joy,
All quivering with the flow of strains divine,
And trembling to its core with hidden hope,—
A flame that burns in silence in the breast,
Amassing fuel from some secret source,
While adding vigour to the heart: the light
Of inspiration sparkles in her eyes—
The glowing fire of frenzy at the fount—
And each wild glance, so bright and beautiful,
Unfolds a glimpse of heaven to the gaze;
But this destructive, recreant race of men
Feel not the crescent beauty of her lays,
Like to the miser Jew who rubs the gem,
Not for its brilliance, but to find a flaw,
They weigh with sordid souls the thrilling strains,
Till every trill is made discordant, harsh,

And grates and jars upon the fine-tuned ear ;
Her mien to them is over-nice and proud,
And wanting in that coarse, familiar style
To which their souls are held subservient ;
And they would drag her from her lofty throne
To bend a lowly suppliant at their feet,
Where they could trample on her trembling form ;
They see no light of inspiration in her eyes—
To them a flame undreamed of and unknown—
Where beams the love that knows no recompense,
They but behold a dull, dark, languid smoke,
With images—that savour of divine,
Beyond their knowledge—they deem forms of earth,
By them beheld through glasses framed with clay.

Oh, how they fume and fret, these men of state !
They wrangle with each other, and revile
Their brother men with cavilous demean,
Not thinking they condemn themselves thereby :
My very soul could laughingly enjoy

Their bickerings, did I not pity them ;
For they are still my fellow-men, removed
Alone by sin, and vile, debasing acts,
Unto a state that Virtue must contemn,
Hugging Hypocrisy unto their breasts
Till blood, heart, soul, and sense, are changed and
false :

No innate good or right remain in them,
Mourning and sorrowed, they have left them long ;
Yet I would fain instil into their souls
One spark of virtue, that its seed may root
And blossom forth with palmy, fulgent buds
Into a tree of Truth and Purity,
Converting all their hearts to sense of Right
And Justice, and reveal their erring ways—
Their guilty souls all steeped in slough of Sin,
And change them from perverters of mankind
To living ornaments of Truth and Right,
And rock-ribbed statues of converted Sin.

“The multitude is always in the wrong,”
And ever will be, while they meekly list
To these perverters of domestic truths,
Who find delight in moulding hearts corrupt
With thoughts impure, with vile, malignant hate,
Imparting Slander, cancerous disease,
Through all the veins, and, mingling with the blood
That quickly courses onward to the heart,
It preys upon the living soul eterne,
And casts its ill, offensive odour out,
And spreads contagion to each heart contact ;
That deals corroding, burning drops of sweat
Unto the chaste, fair brow of Purity ;
The child of Envy, and of broken hearts,
The fountain source, the co-existent mate
Of cringing Falsehood and Hypocrisy.

This dread disease of Slander fills the air
With moans and lamentations, that arise
From beings pure in heart and chaste in soul :

Each word, each act, by Slander is construed
To bear a meaning full of guilty guile,
And deeds that shade the brow of Purity,
And shame the blushing front of Innocence :
Contagion-winged, it flies apace o'er Earth,
And, spreading as it flies, it gains fresh deeds
For vile comment, increasing false report,
Exaggerating every fault, until each tongue
Is teeming with the false, malicious tale,
That harrows up the virtuous victim's heart,
And smites amain the trembling chords of Life.

Give Slander but a peg, whereon to hang
The cap of foul conjecture, it will shroud
With overhanging gloom its mantle there ;
And Peace in fear and trepidation flies
From out the shadow of the cloak and dies.
It twinkles in the distance but a spark,
A small and tiny flame of lesser note,
That must be closely noticed to be seen ;

Yet even seen, it but inspires alone
A passing notice, worthy of no thought,
Or curls the lips with eloquent contempt ;
But flaring up with red and glaring flame,
Increasing, as it comes in near approach,
In greater magnitude—the murky winds,
Enhancing fuel, bear with every breath
New sparks to swell the crackling flame ;—the
clouds

Grow dark and gloomy with expectant woe,
And, laden down with black, infectious spleen,
They gather round and darkly dim the broad
And chaste horizon of the soul ;—still on
The flame advances nearer, rending up
The fronting lawn of peace and happiness,
And blighting, blasting all the growing shrubs
Of Joy, that shade the rare domain of Bliss ;
Still nearer, and the burning, fiery flame
Leaps to the heart with demoniac bound,
And melts its golden chords to worthless dross,

And, 'mid the scum of desolation, leaves
The once gay, happy heart parched, dried, and
dumb!

Grant me, O Muse, propitious! Be my soul
Encased in ribs of adamant, and thongs
Of strong asbestos tightly clasp the shield
Of Truth and Purity unto my breast,
That I may war with Slander, and contend
Unto the death with Vice, with every sin—
That Envy or malicious Hate may cast
Their venom'd darts in vain against my breast,
Striving to gain an entrance, and to pierce
The sin-proof coat of adamantine mail,
And vainly seek to crush the stubborn ribs,
And strike the heart, a pliant prey, with grief
And never-ending woe—writhing with pain,
Until the silken threads, that wrap around
The pome, give one faint, trembling sound, 'and
pass,

All quivering, on to long Eternity !
I would hurl back the poisoned, venom'd darts,
And plant them in the bosom whence they sprung :
While living, I would see the victor, Right,
And dying, let triumphant be the Truth ;
And, clad in robes asbestine, I would quench
The foul, infectious, lurid flame of Slander,
Until each spark shall rot to calcined dust,—
Rid Virtue of her secret, hostile foe,
So that no longer lamentations wild,
Nor wailful moans from agonizing breasts,
Will chant their woful dirges on the air,
But Virtue may abide in happy peace,
And Purity herself be ever pure ;
No breath of Slander stirring up the clouds
Of darkness that are banished and entombed.

Grant me, O Muse, propitious ! And thy spear
Shall carry death into the ranks of Sin :
I will unfurl thy banner in the field

Of carnage and the deadly battle-ground ;
“For God and Truth,” emblazoned on its folds
In characters all glittering with gold ;
And I will trumpet out “For God and Truth”
Unto the battling elements of strife,
And ring aloud the pæan until Sin
Shall drop his warlike weapons to the ground,
And tremble in his mail with ghastly fear,
Affrighted at the blast—the mighty words ;
And Hate and Envy, quaking on the earth,
Borne down with iron shafts, shall hear the cry
Of joyous victory—the magic sound
Swell out and fill the air ; and then shall die.
The watchword, warwhoop of my eager soul
Through life, to death, shall be “For God and
Truth.”

From Earth to Heaven a continuous wail
Of woe and lamentation rises up
In murky streams along the pathless space ;

So sad, heart-rending are these sighs and moans,
That angels high in Heaven drop the tear
Of sorrow for the doomed and damned of Earth :
Up from the stately palace, steeped in sin,—
Up from the lowly hut, where grovelling worms
Load night and day with loud, unceasing plaints,—
Up from the bosom of the ocean broad,—
Up from the secret caves, where lank Despair
Is hidden, groaning deep, to torment chained,—
Up from the bowels of the Earth, this wail
Of endless lamentation bears aloft
Its thrilling peals of wretchedness and pain,
And pierces through the vaulted gates of Heaven,
Unto the footsteps of the throne of God.

Where'er the sense has space to penetrate,
When gazing on the world as one above,
The inward eye of outraged Truth beholds :—

A many myriad host of human worms,

Each one pursuing its own path, slide down
The varied avenues of destiny,
And as so many rivulets and rills
Flow onward and concentre in the sea,
These human worms form one vast field of Sin.

Each one pursuing its own path, they glide
Along the slippery tracks, some overtake
Or meet with kindred beings where their paths
Converge together, or are joined in one ;
A brief dispute—one dies, the other lives
Still sliding to the spacious field of Sin.

Still downward ; and the paths grow broad and
wide :

A restless, wavy host are ever gliding down,
Some leaping, bounding down with reckless haste,
And others jog along with idle trot ;
The war from two extends to many worms,
All fighting in the fatal field of Sin.

And here and there are moving little groups
Of concentrated forms, leagued in one band;
They trample on the heels of those before,
Whose limbs are weak and weary-worn with march;
The fresh behind crush down the faint in front,
And carnage crimsons o'er the field of Sin.

No lack of forms:—the ever-flowing tide
Brings down the stream fresh applicants for Death:
The smooth, hard-trodden roads are ever filled
With mortal worms, besmeared with gory mire,
While chuckling demons are for ever near
To press them downward to the field of Sin.

Still sliding down apace, some, lone and few,
Have robes of gold clasped closely to their backs,
While costly gems, plucked by the way, cast out
A brazen light; they pave their path with gold,
With Mammon's dross, with soul-tormenting wealth,
And swiftly pass into the field of Sin.

And in this mighty plain vast lakes of blood,
All curdled up, and stagnant, putrid pools,
Cast up a noxious mist, and hang a cloud
Of leaden darkness, that shuts out and glooms
The genial rays of Virtue bright and warm;—
A home of horrors is the field of Sin.

Down-wending to this fell, this turbid field,
The many myriad paths that lead thereto
Are small and narrow, spread from every point,
But, intersecting each, they broader grow,
Until the spacious Earth extant is made
A broad way unto Death—the field of Sin.

And these are but a few of many fruits
That spring to life and blossom from the seeds
Implanted in the fertile soil of Life,
By reckless, pedant teachers rashly sown.
I crave not, neither do I wish for praise
Or comment from this recreant race of men;

Their praise would shame and damn me in the sight.
Of worthy men with whom my inner soul
Would wish to hold communion, converse sweet ;
One breath from whom I hold in more esteem
Than all the mighty whirlwinds, pedant sped,
That could be hurled against my feeble form,
Though black with Slander and malicious Hate.

What need have I to hug the shrine of Sin,
Or stain my knee by bending to its idols ;
To paint its brow all black and thick with scurf ;
To glaze its hideous form with Falsehood's gloss ;
To shade its withered temples with a wreath,
Inwoven on the vines of sly Deceit,
Or mask the monster 'neath a gilded veil ?
My unstained conscience bids me still rejoice ;
My breast is filled with hopes and pleasures sweet ;
My heart to soft emotions leaps and bounds,
And all my soul, by happiness made glad,
Still gushes up a swelling stream of joy ;

But Sin can give no such content as this ;
Its prospect but unfolds a wretched life
Of dark deformity unto my view.

My soul would stamp upon this shapeless mass,
This spongy world of wickedness and sin,
With firm and upright feet ; and, bounding up,
My spirit to a brighter land would soar,
And from a happier, purer, sinless realm,
Would look in pity on the forms below,
For ever sinning, warring, starving, dying !

Be once unto the mighty multitude
For ever lost, and on its skinny neck
Plant firm thy foot, its earthly idols spurn,
And treat the world's opinion with contempt,—
That fickle tyrant, at whose mould'ring shrine
So many bow and flourish for a space,
And, with the change, give way and die forgot,
Like to the dog, 'twill cringe and lick thy foot,

And, whining, it will beg thy cast-off crumbs.
The ignorant world, the mighty multitude,
Know not the value of their rarest gems,
Until the waters of oblivion
Have closed for ever o'er their brilliancy !
And there are poets who do haply live—
Associate with their brain's poetic sphere,
Untrammelled in their thoughts and unadmired,
Though free from all the world's unjust attacks—
In secret life, unto the world unknown ;
Some at the ploughshare with a rustic gait
Stretch out their days in tilling Nature's soil,
And gaze on 'Nature's naked loveliness'
With rolling eyes in agony of love ;
They feel the spell of Beauty and the charm
Of Poesy deep-centred in their souls ;
On each green leaf for them a lay is writ ;
Each new-blown rose, that casts its fragrance forth,
Instils into their breasts a world of thoughts
Of pleasure—longings for they know not what ;

The ever-gushing day-songs of the birds,
With which the new-robed trees seem all alive
When bridged Spring has greened the lap of Earth,
Cause them to rest them on the velvet moss,
And think, and think, and yet they know not why:
And these are Nature's poets, who enjoy
The beauties of Creation and of Art;
Who pass their lives as dreamers in a dream;
Who have a mine of bright, poetic fire
Imbedded in their brains, though unexpressed.
O happy, happy poets! you can live
And revel in the fields of virgin Truth,
With no faint fear and no despondent thoughts.
Of how the world will look upon your works—
Yourself your world—the rest all wilderness;
But we, who struggle for the good of Man,
To cheer his flagging spirits, soothe his soul,
To wrest him from the margin of despair,
Must fight our way for entrance to the love
Of the ungrateful world that gives reward

In shape of pain forever in ferment ;
We, for the burning sweat of fair-born day
And eyesores of the night, have not the balm
Of even human cheer and kindness
To bid us strive for benefiting Man ;
For loving kisses we receive but blows,
And for the truths that we bring forth to light,
And tender to the world as priceless gifts,
To add one wreath the more of earthly lore
Unto the crown of jewels in the classic realm,
It takes the gems, but pitilessly pelts
Our lean, lank bodies with the stones of earth.
And we are lonely ; *they* will love us not,
Whom we would worship to idolatry
And madly, with but one remove from God :
We are ycleped the dreamers, we who work
The work above all others, toil of brain,
Yet gain no earthly profit, starve and die,
Like to the snow-flakes sink to earth unwept,
Except the tear-drops shed by us alone :

Evil the judge; and by this wanton world
We are ycleped the dreamers! Be it so.
If Sleep be sistered unto Death; if dreams
Be angel whispers voicing to the soul,
While preternatural prophecies convey
The future, allegoric, to the mind;
Then we have that within our brains akin
To immortality, akin to Heaven:
We will be dreamers; we will shape our dreams,
Our day-dreams, for redemption of the world.
God's will be done! each goodly man is made
A harbinger of Truth, to ray His light
O'er all the spread of habitable Earth;
Let each one's duty be so ministered
That when the judgment day of reckoning comes,
As come it will, he may look up to God,
And show increase of talents many-fold.

My soul grows sick of Sin, and pants for air,
Longs for restraint from such a grievous strain.

Be thou, O stately Clio ! be my muse :
Once, when through Nassau's high and classic halls
I roamed a boy, a wayward, ranting youth,
Thou wert my guide, my first and dearest love !
Assist me : let thy harp be tuned and strung
With nobler themes than yet my lyre has sung,
Then Clio, with a retrospective gaze :—

Thou first, immortal CHATTERTON ! poor boy !
I weep thee living, mourn thee dead ; thy wings
Were fledged in glory, but were furled in woe !
Thou, who, with genius innate in thy soul,
Didst fill the absent ages with the forms
Of fancy, once possessed of life, and who
Unto the Present didst succumb the Past ;
A child in years, but yet a man in lore ;
A child of song, a poet born of Heaven !
The fire of genius in thy soul of song,
Communing with its burning self alone,
Burst forth upon the world—a motley crew,—

With meteoric blaze, and lit the pile
Of long-forgotten deeds into a flame.
Thou hadst no friend in whom to trust the dark
And misty shadows that loomed up afar
From out the world of fancy in thy brain,
All drear—that preyed upon thy soul ;—no guide
To teach thy noble nature how to tread
With safety all the thorny paths through Life,—
To turn the gloomy current of thy thoughts
From things of after life, and live for Man ;
And there was stretched no helping hand to save
Thee from the horrors of an early grave,
That opened to thine agonizing view,
And gaped the sole resource—the only breast
That offered refuge from the gloomy thoughts
That lashed their master with tormenting thongs ;
Dark, sad, and solemn, that did prey upon
Thy being, and consumed the threads of Life.
Unguided, friendless, cheerless ; wretched boy !
Thy mind didst master time : thy spacious soul,

Crammed with the things of Earth, yet craving
more,

Didst brood in secret on Eternity,
Which was revealed unto thy longing gaze
Beyond the grave, in mystery of Death.

Sigh for humanity, ye gentle bards !

The spring-trap that lies lurking in the grass,
The gilded bait that blinded men gulp down,
And find the hook is rooting up the heart—

Moan, O ye winds ! and let the zephyrs chant
A dirge of sorrow for the starving bard !

Toll, bells ! and let your leaden numbers ring
With mournful music ; let a wailful sound

Be wafted through the air, encased with grief,
Unto this favoured child of Poesy !

Weep, weep and mourn, ye tender maidens all !

Weep that while living he was unbeloved,

And, ere the tide of friendship reached him, passed
From Time to sleep with “muses and romance !”

In life he could not turn to mortal man

And call him friend ; in death he wished for none ;
But, now that he has fled from worldly woes,
From pain, starvation, and the racking thoughts
That hunted him down to the gaping grave,
Uncalled by Death, and rashly ere his time,
Where breathes the living soul that calls not friend
This noble bard of immortality,
The young, undying poet of the heart,
Whose wings were fledged in glory, but were furled
In woe ? Alas ! for human sympathy,—
The catch-word, that the hungered, starving soul
May hope for, yet will perish in despair ;
When needed most it basely clings to self,
Upon some pinnacle above the herd,
And lets the tide of dying souls sweep by,
Their hot breath crisping up its winning locks—
The flow of friendly feeling came too late,
Came when the clammy, clayey couch of Death
Had closed its portals o'er his lifeless form.
A shout triumphant filled the lofty domes

Within the realm of Song, and echoed through
The wide and sweet domain of Melody,
And trembled in the secret vaults of Joy,
When the stray soul of this their wandered child
Came wildly chanting through the golden gates,
And sought the bosom of its mother Muse.

Thou KEATS, the most poetical of bards !
The finest, warmest brain that ever touched
The glowing harp of Life, or swept the stroke
Of magic music o'er its golden strings !
The mellow sound arising from thy harp
Reverberates for ever, never still,
When touched by feeling natures such as thine ;
Is soothing in its melody, sweet, soft
In music, and is cheering in its tone
As ever warmed the sunshine of the soul,
Or sought the vaulted chambers of the breast,
To thrill with harmony the heart of man.
All bright and brilliant as the frescoed light,

That filled the misty shadows on the floor,
With rich and soft magnificence,
From out the lofty casement in thy "Eve;"—
Entrancing as the low, melodious lute
That young, brave Porphyro did lightly touch,
With lover lays beside the downy couch
Of sleeping Madeline, who woke to find
Her one sweet dream was true, for ever true;—
As lofty as thy high Hyperion halls,
With caves unfathomable in their depths,
And towers spiring to the vaulted skies;—
Are all thy visions of magnificence!
A forest of romance grew in thy mind;
Each fancy was a wild-rose sweet perfumed,
Vermilion-dyed and dimmed with diamond dew;
And from thy fertile brain the bright green leaves
Of happy thoughts spread o'er the lofty trees;
Time-proof, sublime, and century-bodied oaks,
The gorgeous mantle of imagination;
Here, there, and everywhere, clear, rippling rills

Of sweet, pellucid ideas, fancy-born,
Coursed through the grand dominion of thy brain.
And thou art dead ! Oh no ! the lesser part
May be, but not the soul ; thy children bear
Thine every image and thine every grace
Engraven on each lineament, and hail
Thee father, thee alone ; they bid me weep
In sorrow for their parent, noble KEATS !
And thou art dead ! the critic's barbéd shaft
Went howling on in anguish through thy breast,
And quivered in thy heart, struck mute and dumb.
Long didst thou wrestle with the burning pain,
Long didst thou wrestle, but to live for love,
And Beauty, and the fond delight of Man—
In vain ; it rankled deeper to thy core,
Instilled disease within thy mortal frame,
And sharp, quick pains of agony sped through
Thy stricken breast, and tore it up with woe ;
It left thee never until friendly Death
Relieved thy aching bosom of its woe,

And spread the robe of daisies o'er thy form.
Sleep thou the sleep of death in happy peace :
There Mercy will extend her pardoning hand,
And tread with thee the paradise of Heaven ;
There Friendship, pure and unalloyed of earth,
Will fold thy form in close and warm embrace,
And rest thy head, faint by contact with woe,
Upon the bosom of her swelling breast ;
There Joy will chant with thee the hymns of
praise,

And Happiness be ever with thy soul,
By critics hunted down and chased from Earth—
Like to the hart that, driven to the cliff,
Gazed back in fear upon the mouthing pack,
Then, bleating sadly, leaped the dizzy height,
And mangled, rolled into Eternity !
The wolf-hounds of the pen paused on the brink,
And howling, gazed into the deep, dark gulf
With flashing eyes, made fierce by baffled rage,
Then bounded back within the forest shades

To start and trail some other noble prey,
And goad their victim down the gulf of Death.
Alas for KEATS! his was a mournful fate!
The realm of rare romances was his home;
The love of Beauty, lofty and sublime,
Did spread a robe of splendour o'er each thought
That flowed like inspiration from his pen,
And trickled through the spangled mead of mind,
Meandering, winding down the fairy field,
Until it leaped into the sea of Thought.
Alas for KEATS! I dip the pen in tears,
And write his name,—an honoured, mournful name,
Beloved by poets and by men,—in water,
That it may live when others are forgot.

Thou, outcast SHELLEY! who, for love of Truth,
And for the love of doing good to Man,
Redeeming mortals from the sway of Vice,
That smiled on evils, chuckled at each sin,
Wast driven from the bosom of thy friends;

And even kindred, in whose throbbing veins
The same blood flowed, did spurn thy gifted mind—
Deserted, tortured to the quick with grief,
Thy genius left to be its own sole guide,
From boyhood's home and native land wast cast
A wanderer on the barren shore of Life,
To struggle in the quicksands of the world,
Beat back the breakers, and the pitfalls shun
That gaped on every side to gulf thy soul
Deep in the slough of wretchedness and woe.
How dark and dreary seemed to him the book
Of vague Futurity! it gloomed in darkness:
Amid the crowded, populated world
He stood alone, debarred from every joy,
Except the thoughts that centred in his breast,
In close communion with the star of Hope,
And urged him on to glory and to fame:
No friend,—he looked on all as enemies!
He bade his soul walk forth unto the fray,
And carry war to Vice and all the world;

He waged the war successful, fought it well ;
Himself his only stay, his sole support,
And mighty in the sense of wrong and shame,
That had been heaped in overwhelming mass
Upon his youthful head, and strong in might
And pure design of benefiting Man—
He conquered ; and the ordeal fire passed through
Unscathed, though chastened and made brighter.
purer.

He too was reft of life in bloom of pride,
And found a sad, untimely, watery grave,
Ere yet the woes of Life, and they were hard,
Had wrinkled o'er his manly, noble brow.

Thus find we here another son of song
Cast by the world,—the noble, patron world !—
From station, friends, and all that made life dear,
All lonely and deserted, to pursue
The phantoms of his mind, his erring ways.
Misguided who can marvel he should be !

Yet still he lived to reach the fane of Glory,
And carve his name high in the house of Fame :
He made the abject world ring out the blast
Of praise and favour on the trumpet loud,
The same that drove him from his native land
To mix with strangers and to die unwept.
His fond delusion was his love for men,
Who, when he showed his love and sought to turn
Them from their vices, basely turned their backs
And cast him from their doors, friendless, cheer-
less !

A dog would show more gratitude than this,
And leap in rapture when it was beloved ;
And it would die, still faithful to the last,
For him who showed his love, though clad in rags,
And poverty be gnawing at his heart !
But ever with the world, to folly chained,
It spurns the costly gem that offers up
Its worth in homage as Affection's pledge ;
And when in after years the world seeks out

The gem, they find its brilliance rusted, dimmed ;
Incessant and for ever on the wing
To find some trinket or some gilded toy
To please its wanton fancy for a time,
But, soon grown wearied with its flimsy worth,
It, childlike, casts the glittering bauble by.

Thou, soul-burnt BYRON ! drenched in lofty lore ;
The deep-imbedded mines, unto their depths,
Of earthly knowledge were by thee explored :
Thy nature once was tender, formed of love,
Ere yet the world misused thee and did clip
The up-turned pinions of thy soaring Muse ;
Then slighted merit gave thee double strength,
Thy blood did course thy swollen veins on fire,
And deeply in thy wounded, stricken heart
The standard of Revenge was planted firm,
And spread its banner out with mighty folds,
And in its deadly clasp did crush to death
The puffed-up pedants, milk-and-water bards,

Who dared to censure though with but a breath ;
The shafts of Satire were by thee rained out
In torrents of contempt and just disdain
Against the abject world, until in fear
It came, all whining, fawning at thy feet,
And fed upon the food it once had spurned,
Now changed to wormwood and the bitter gall.

But turn we to our own dear native land ;
We too have bards who suffer from the shafts
Of unjust criticism, hurled by Hate.

Unhappy POE ! thou gifted son of song !
Oppressed in spirit by the chills of Life ;
Thy soul, to poverty and torment chained,
In secret brooded on the gloomy side
Of nature, and the horrors of Despair ;
At times thy thoughts, to gloomy fancy wed,
Are as the plumage of thy " Raven's " wing,
Dark, sombre, solemn as midnight black :

Thy being fed on Beauty ; it was food
That nourished all the fancies of thy brain,
A beacon-light that glowed thy painful path
With visions of sublime and luster bright :
Thine idol Beauty ! and whate'er in Art
Or Nature bore the type of loveliness,
Warmed up the inner chambers of thy breast,
And fired the mass of genius in thy soul,
Intoxicated, frenzied with delight
By forms of fancy and romantic thoughts :
A fond, devoted husband, and a friend
To struggling genius, while a foe to Vice ;
Untrammelled, biassed by no sickly fear
Thy thoughts were spoken out ; though poor, yet
proud,
For this, while living, thou didst suffer much,
Was tossed about by every rolling wave
That brought the surge from off the worldly sea,
Where battling Strife and Discord reign supreme ;
There on the raging billows, never lulled,

Thy bark was launched, and made the sea its
home.

But thou art dead! and mighty (!) G*****D now,
The prince of critics and the chief of men
Whose deeds and sins and vices I have sung,
Converts each weakness and each fault to crime,
Those faults and weaknesses to which each man
Is more or less a slave, to which the eye
Of Pity should be turned compassionate,
And Mercy's hand should be extended out
In sympathy for frailties born with man;
These minor frailties of the private man
Are by this critic changed to shame and crime,
That slur and stain the glory of thy name,
Thy high renown, and blast thy public fame.
While thou wast living, POE, this braying ass
Dared not to whisper but the faintest breath
Of cavil in default of thee and thine,
But now, the lion prostrate on the ground,
Oh, how he kicks thee with malicious heel!

The voice of outraged Justice cries aloud
Against his evil course—a trust betrayed,
Wormed out in guise of friendship—base deceit !
And swelling up in anger cries, “No more !”
Humanities, the heir of PoE, condemns
His treason, and cries out, “Lay on no more !”
A hollow sound of anguish from the grave,
Where the “unhappy master” lies, looms up,
And thunders to his conscience, in a tone
Sepulchral and unearthly, “Never more !”
An angered poet bids him, “Cease, no more.”
Rest thou “within the distant Aiden,” PoE,
Rest thou upon the breast of thy “Lenore,”
Long-lost, but found in Heaven, glory-clad,
Thine earthly bonds are sundered, cleft in twain,
And long Eternity is now thy home ;
We will avenge thee, we, thy brother bards,
Though others falsify the sacred trust
Of Death, yet we will trumpet out thy fame,

And prove thee worthy of a nation's pride,
A true, a gifted, lofty son of song!

And there are living some who merit praise
And favour in the literati crowd;
Kind Justice bids me honour with their names
This medley, stinging, lauding sermon mine:—
Now Clio from her retrospect, unto
Aspiring Genius, worthy of the bays!

Let self-made TAYLOR still enchant the soul
With songs of pleasure, and the welcome sound,
Reverberating from his golden lyre;
And, chanting as he steps the rounds of Fame,
Let native genius bear him upward high,
To raise the standard of his natal soil,
And find a home in every patriot heart.

And still let STODDARD strike the happy harp

Of poesy with sweet, harmonious notes,
And chase the echoes through the golden skies,
And chase them to the "Castle in the Air;"
And from the rare domain look down to see
The laurels that shall be his proud reward.

Let Doric READ,—a worthy trio here,—
Pursue the pleasant path of meek simplicity,
And revel sportive in "the realm of dreams,"
And cull sweet dreams from fancy's fairy field
To lull the throbbings of the care-worn soul,
And thrill the finer tendons of the heart;
And let his strains of true sincerity—
The noblest attribute by man possessed—
And gravity be whispered unto men,
And wend their way direct unto the heart,
That waking he may find the Muses' wreath
Of living roses circled round his brow.

The old man BRYANT, dignified and grave!

Let him possess the poet's fireside seat,
Be taken to each heart; and every home
Extend a welcome to the grave old bard,
Grown gray in service, while the dews of Time
Have chilled to ice upon his furrowed brow;
And let his strains of sober reasonings,
That, flowing from a melancholy muse,
Are pure in morals, chaste in thought, and grand,
Ennoble and enrich the heart of Man
With lofty ideas and a serious tone.

Let WILLIS still write poetry in prose,
And golden grains of genius dazzle bright
And sparkle from his softly-flowing verse,
With brilliance that enchains the spellbound sense,
And leaves sweet echoes tingling in the ear.

And still let BOKER with untrammelled verse,
With hand unwavering and a lofty mind,

Dispensing wide a melancholy sweet
And pleasure—court the grand Dramatic Muse,
Once wed to Shakspeare, now a widowed bride,
Whose soul embrace of all the virgin Nine
Is most ambitious and so rarely filled,
That empires rise and fall in the between ;
Her smile is melancholy, and her frown
Is all the anger of the gods combined.
Mark well her humour ; press her by degrees
With studied graces, time-embodied thoughts,
And she will wed thee, clasp thee to her breast,
And grant thee fame and immortality,
That live but co-existent with her smile !
Dramatic BOKER with his young, warm heart
Gains but a just applause when clapping crowds
In rapture bound their “bravos” to the dome,
And swell their echoes buoyant on the air,
While every worthy hand grants him the palm,
For native genius and dramatic verse.

“Men are not won by ears so well as eyes ;”
And, if to judge by sentient men’s applause,
Young BOKER need not heed the envious groans
That gurgles forth from Mount Parnassus, dragged—
By some mordacious fancy, some sick soul—
Adown to earth and put in pillory :
Too often we have traitors—bastard bards—
Who, with ambition greater than success,
And minds too small to give support and strength
Unto their aspirations—do desert
The purer cause, and to the critic clan
Resort, unto the shame of all our race.

Let ALEXANDER, STOUT and STREET
Unfurl the Muses’ banner to the winds,
And be the motto of ‘Excelsior,’
In golden letters, ever on their view,
To press them onward through the march of Time
Unto the fronting rank, to high renown ;

And each lay tribute on the mystic mount:
Let Application lead them to the vaults
Of hidden science and to cells unknown,
And bear them to the high and loric halls
Of Wisdom and the chambers unexplored,
Where lurks the secret and the cloistered lore:
Let them not grasp at large, but rotten, roots,
Or they will tumble to the gulf beneath,
But let them seize the small, green twigs of Life,
And step by step they safely may ascend
Unto the dizzy pinnacle of Fame,
Unmindful of the critics, though they hurl
The 'paper bullets' of an inky brain,
Made peevish, fretful by splenetic ire,
And daub your 'hot-pressed' thick with curdled
ink—

Pursue each one thy fancy, and the light
That leads thee onward unto high renown:
Be truthful to the Muses, they will guard

And shield thee from the many venom'd darts
That darken all the atmosphere of Life.

We are a happy race: GRACE GREENWOOD comes,
The queen of female fancy and the gentler sex,
The queen of hearts since saintly OSGOOD'S death,
To teach the matrons and the maidens bright,
Who sit and sigh for lovers and for love
In moonlit evenings and in shaded groves—
The paths of Virtue through this tempting world,
With strains of Beauty and Affection's lays;—
To soothe and cheer the drooping, fainting soul
With visions of a future life of Joy,
Instilling chaste, pure thoughts, to Man unknown.

But there is one bard who, I sadly ween,
Should spur Pegasus on to higher flights,
Lest, floating downward on an idle wing,
Ere long the horse will drop to Earth, asleep:

Whilom aspiring youth and hope of fame
Lent soft enchantment to the distant view,
And Mount Parnassus was a golden fane
That glittered in the halo of the sun,
Pegasus airward soared, sublimely high,
His pinions laden down with fragrant sweets ;
And with the joyous agony of mind,
He strewed the earth as upward still he flew ;
But now, the temple gained, he sadly bores
His former patrons with an idle song.
Go, bard, unto the seaside once again,
Convey thy Muse beside its sparkling shore,
In place of sand dig up the precious pearls
That lie embosomed in the briny depths ;
Then to the fireside, that the warm, bright rays
Of winter's cheer may lend a golden charm
Of bright effulgence to each sparkling gem :
Let not thy worldly wealth or earthly goods
Seduce thy spirit from the Muses' love ;

But spur Pegasus on, and fan his wings,
That now seem jaded, with a glowing breath,
That men may once again delight to list
Unto the echoes of the lonely eve.

Here Clio ceases ; and my scribbling pen
Has worn the diamond from its pointed nib,
Though still enough remains to scrawl the name
Of B*** H. R*****N the *argus*-eyed,
The last and least of the reviewing clan ;—
The last—in that his blunt, notorious pen,
Slaving for party faction, wed to strife,
Will hammer at another's youthful faults
And petty weaknesses, long since eschewed,
When others cease ; nor then delays to strike,
But aims a blow, a last, an awful blow !
Unto the “end of nothing whittled to
A point ;” the least—in that none heed, but smile
To view the fly dash rampant at the horse.

Immortal mould of limpsy littleness !
Great symbol of unlettered arrogance !
Oh, that the gods might view him at his work,
Misplacing semicolons for his means ;
Perverting all the subject for a flaw ;
And tugging at his brain for inky balls
To hurl against his lamblike, peaceful prey ;—
If mirth unto us mortals, what would be
The laughter of Apollo and his peers !
The troubled streams of faction such as his,
The muddled creeks of politics, besmeared
Upon their surface with the scum of strife,
And crystal flowing waters of divine
And truthful poetry will ne'er comate ;
And he, who floats his bark upon the creeks
Of Faction, is too far removed to cast
A nice, discriminating gaze, or view
The sun-lit, jewelled spray of living Joy
That sparkles from the waters of the Muse.

How many a dunce, how many a noisy calf,
Reclining restless in the censor's chair,
Gained by presumption and deceptive arts,
With quibbling quill can scrawl a foolscap page
With ranting trash and low, pedantic lays,
And call his trash a true and just review;
And in his walks find praise and great applause
From gossiping old maids and birdling bards!
Just Heavens! are we to meekly bear the lash
Of scribbling coxcombs and conceited fools,
Of R*****N, mere shadow of a man,
With lean, lank form, meagre and tall and slim;
With clipping scissors ever ready at his bid;
With high, stupendous monuments of paste,
Wherein he glories with a pedant pride;
He seems a very ghoul on poetry,
While faction and contention are his gods.
But let him pass: I honour him too great
With even notice, though it be contempt.

But Truth and Justice, like the warrior chief
Who stands begirt with freemen, strong in might—
Have need of none of fashion's plumages,
Or tawdry garments of mechanic Art,
But, blunt and staid in dress, and huge in form,
They carry with them and enforce belief;
It is alone Injustice and Untruth
That deck their slimy bodies in a dress
Of gaudy gilt, and flounce their venom'd shafts
In robes seducing and the quirks of Art,
That men may first admire, and then believe,
Their reasons, dazzled by the glossy dress,
Made blinded to the sharp, secreted sting
Of Falsehood, that lies lurking in the frieze,
And carries to the victim pain and Death.
And now I bid defiance to the crew
Of critics down to petty R*****N,
And hurl my gauntlet to the whole vile herd,

Reminding all, who have begun their life
Of state, to pore and ponder on the truth,—
That Power is mighty, and by God is given
To temper Man and prove him worthy Heaven.

THE END.

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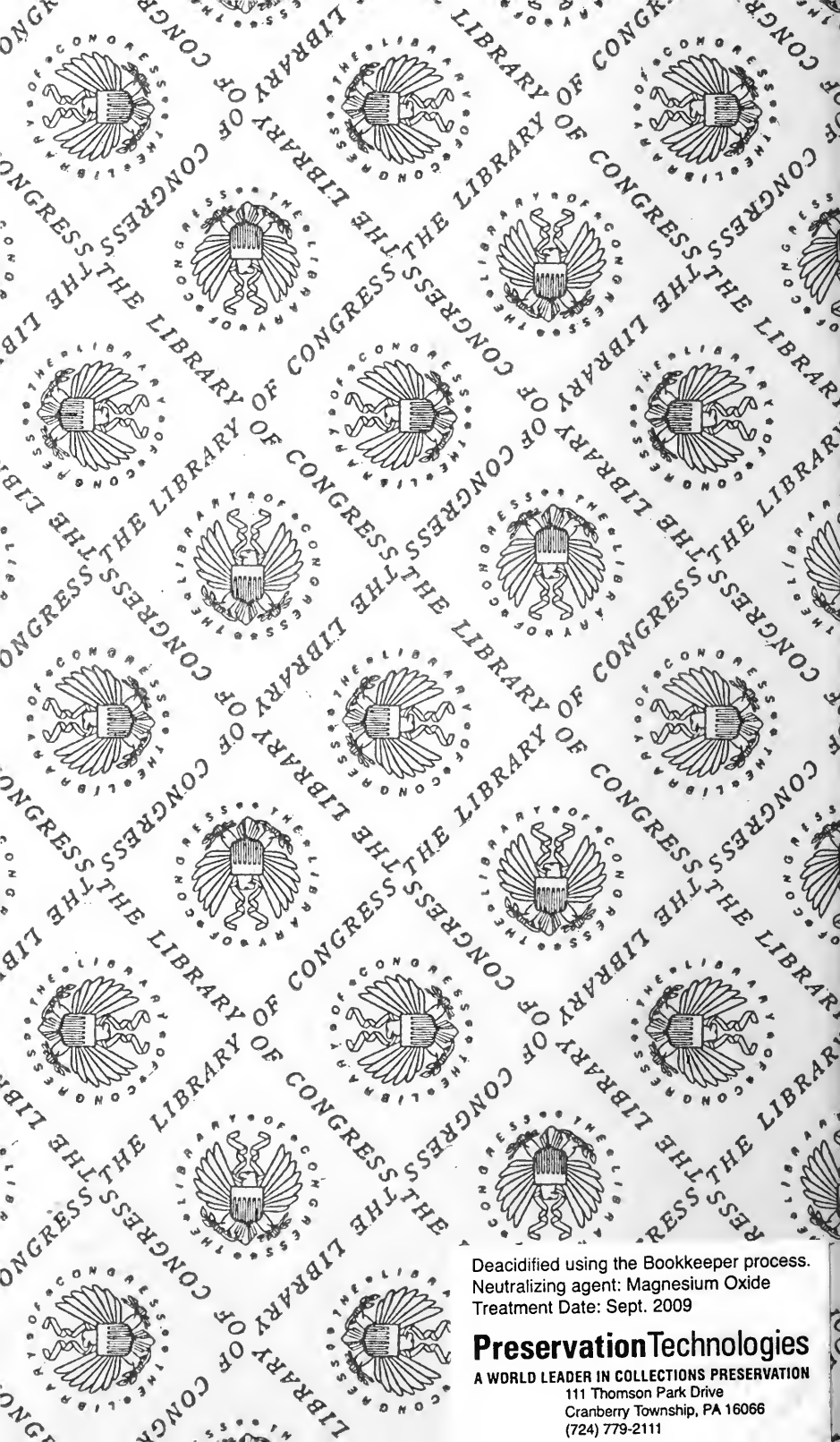
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Lindsay & Blackiston

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Poem

✓ Age of Sin

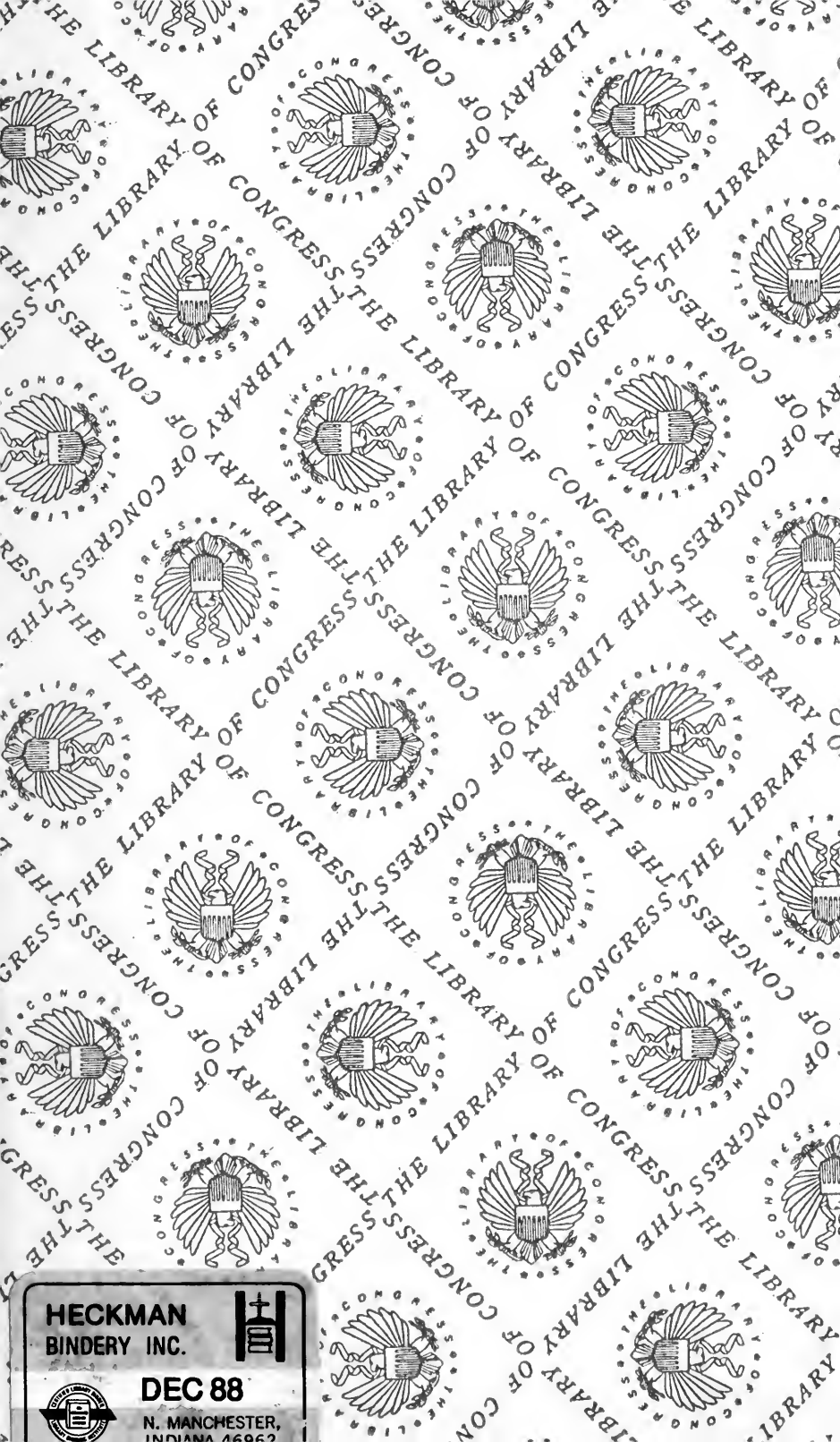


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